

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
December 1 - 7, 2011

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1. Clinton: Bioweapons Threat Is Growing (12-07-2011)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called for a renewed effort among nations to prevent countries, terrorist groups and criminal organizations from developing, acquiring or using deadly bioweapons.

President Obama made it a top priority to halt the spread of the world's most deadly weapons because an attack from one of them is a serious national security challenge and a significant threat to peoples' lives, Clinton said in remarks at a conference reviewing the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC).

"In an age when people and diseases cross borders with growing ease, bioweapons are a transnational threat, and therefore we must protect against them with transnational action," [Clinton said December 7](#) at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

The United States believes the bioweapons convention is the premier forum for bringing together the security, health, law enforcement and science communities to raise awareness of the ever-changing biological risks and how best to manage them, the White House said in a fact sheet. The 165 nations that signed the BWC are meeting in Geneva over the next three weeks for the seventh convention-review conference. Representatives will evaluate the convention's effectiveness and whether further modifications may be necessary for its enforcement.

The Biological and Toxin Convention, which entered into force on March 26, 1975, bans an entire category of weapons from use in war and peace. It expands on the 1925 Geneva Conventions,

which initially banned the use of poison gas and bacteriological weapons in the aftermath of World War I, when bioweapons were actively used in combat.

Clinton noted the paradox of advances in modern science and technology, which make it possible to prevent and cure more diseases, but also make it easier for governments and terrorists to develop bioweapons. Not only is it easier to develop these weapons, she added, but it also remains extremely difficult to detect them.

“The same equipment and technical knowledge used for legitimate research to save lives can also be used to manufacture deadly diseases,” Clinton told conference delegates.

One of the unrecognized successes of the bioweapons convention is that it engrained a global norm among nations against biological weapons, and even those countries that have not joined the convention no longer seek to acquire them, Clinton said. “Unfortunately, the ability of terrorists and other nonstate actors to develop and use these weapons is growing,” she said, calling for a renewed focus to prevent proliferation.

In the 1990s the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo terrorist group unleashed two attacks in Tokyo by spraying a liquid containing anthrax spores into the air and unleashing sarin gas into the Tokyo subway system. Clinton noted that in 2001 evidence was uncovered in Afghanistan that the terrorist group al-Qaida was actively seeking the ability to carry out bioweapons attacks. And the terrorist group al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula less than a year ago put out a call for people with college degrees in microbiology or chemistry to develop a weapon of mass destruction, she added.

Clinton said there are three areas where members of the BWC should take action. First, she said, the bioweapons convention nations must bolster international confidence that all countries are living up to the requirements of the convention. Part of that is to revise annual reporting requirements so that each nation is doing the same things to guard against the misuse of biological materials, she said.

Second, Clinton said, the BWC nations must strengthen each country’s ability to detect and respond to outbreaks and improve international coordination.

Finally, she said, nations need thoughtful international talks about ways to maximize the benefits of scientific research while minimizing the risks.

Clinton reminded the conference that more than 85 years ago the nations of the world met following World War I and took a strong stand against the use of poison gases and bacteriological weapons, and that spirit and political will is needed again.

[State Dept. on Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference](#) (12-07-2011)

[White House on Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference](#) (12-05-2011)

[U.S. Looks to Expand Cooperation against Bioweapons, Pandemics](#) (12-02-2011)

2. Human Rights Essential for Global Security and Stability (12-06-2011)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton told foreign ministers meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania, that human rights are not simply a moral imperative but an essential component of international security and stability.

“That is especially important and timely in a year in which ordinary citizens across the Middle East and beyond have shown that dignity, freedom and opportunity are aspirations for all people,” Clinton said.

The secretary attended the annual foreign ministerial meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which was hosted by Lithuania. The meeting was held at the LitExpo Conference Center in Vilnius.

The OSCE is composed of 56 states from Europe, Central Asia and North America. It is a forum for political negotiations and decisionmaking in a range of fields from early warning and conflict prevention to crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation to election observation.

“Lasting peace and stability depend just as much on meeting our citizens’ legitimate aspirations as they do on military security,” Clinton told the foreign ministers. The OSCE recommitted itself to the human dimension of security during its summit in Astana the previous year and regards human rights as the core of every undertaking, she said.

But Clinton noted that there are setbacks for democratic institutions, the rule of law process and elections. There is growing intolerance, unreasonable fear of foreigners, and hate crimes directed against religious and ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups. “Violence against women knows no geographic boundaries, and human trafficking remains an urgent problem in the OSCE region,” she said.

Far too many in the region are facing “unremitting persecution” because of political opposition to leaders; journalists are being attacked and killed without consequences; there have been setbacks to institutions set up to expand democracy and the rule of law; seriously flawed elections for parliament have featured attempts to stuff ballot boxes, manipulate voter lists, and other practices; and fundamental freedoms have been threatened, Clinton said.

“Fundamental freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, association and religion apply as much to a Twitter conversation and a gathering organized by NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] on Facebook as they do to a demonstration in a public square,” Clinton said.

Clinton told the foreign ministers that democratic transitions require fair and inclusive elections, and that they also demand that those who are elected embrace democratic norms and rules.

“We therefore expect all democratic actors and elected officials to uphold universal human rights, including women’s rights, to allow free religious practice, to promote tolerance and good relations among communities of different faiths, and to support peaceful relations with their neighbors,” she said.

Before leaving for a major speech on human rights in Geneva at the U.N. Human Rights Council December 6, Clinton also spoke to civil society groups at the Tolerance Center in Vilnius and to the Belarus Civil Society Roundtable.

“Across the OSCE region, what you do and the organizations that you are part of and lead are helping to define the front lines of the struggle on behalf of human rights and democracy for the 21st century,” Clinton said.

[Secretary Clinton on Human Rights in Europe and Globally](#)

[Clinton’s Address in Geneva on International Human Rights Day](#)

3. U.S., Global Partners Pledge Continued Afghanistan Support (12-05-2011)

By MacKenzie C. Babb
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has pledged continued U.S. support for Afghanistan, joining nearly 100 nations in doing so at an international conference in Bonn, Germany, as Afghanistan works toward increasing self-sustainability.

“We want to send a very clear message to the people of Afghanistan that as they continue to make tough decisions, we will stand with them and do so in that spirit of mutual accountability,” [Clinton said December 5](#) during the conference on Afghanistan’s future.

She emphasized that while the United States will continue to provide support for Afghanistan, Afghans themselves must also work to meet the commitments they have made.

“We look forward to working with them to embrace reform, lead their own defense and strengthen their democracy,” Clinton said.

She commended recent advances made by Afghans, highlighting in particular the “considerable progress” achieved by women and civil society during the past 10 years. She said the country’s health care system alone has made a “huge leap for women,” as shown in a new Afghan mortality survey.

“Ten years ago, the maternal mortality rate in Afghanistan was estimated to be the highest in the world. Today, women’s life expectancy has increased by between 15 and 20 years because women are finally getting access to health care, including prenatal care, and far fewer are dying in childbirth,” Clinton said.

While praising other notable gains by the Afghan government in recent years, the secretary acknowledged that “enormous obstacles” remain ahead for Afghanistan.

She said the Taliban remain active, posing security challenges, and noted that the World Bank recently projected that Afghanistan will face continued budget deficits that will require new resources and revenue. Clinton also said there remains much work to be done, by both the Afghan government and civil society, “to strengthen and build democratic institutions and to assure the rule of law.”

The secretary said the United States welcomes a series of economic, political and security plans announced earlier December 5 by Afghan President Hamid Karzai at the conference.

On the economy, she said Afghanistan committed to “set priorities, use international aid effectively and enact a series of economic reforms to crack down on corruption, spur private sector growth and attract new investment.” In response, she said the United States and other international partners will resume financial contributions to the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund.

She said Karzai also committed to expand the capacity of Afghan security forces. Clinton said the United States and other partners remain committed to training, advising and assisting Afghan forces as they take full control of their country’s security by the end of 2014. She added that participants in Bonn set out a blueprint for a post-transition Afghanistan, a road map for what the secretary called a “decade of transformation.”

On the political front, the secretary said Karzai committed to proceed with “inclusive, fair and credible presidential elections and a peaceful, democratic transfer of power in 2014.” She said the United States will continue to provide support for Afghanistan’s democracy, including the civil society.

Clinton added that Afghans have also committed to building stronger regional ties, and said the United States looks to Afghanistan’s neighbors to “actively support an inclusive Afghan-led, Afghan-owned reconciliation process.”

The Bonn conference, which brought together representatives from nearly 100 of Afghanistan’s neighbors, near-neighbors and international partners, was hosted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and chaired by Karzai.

Secretary Clinton is scheduled to travel to Lithuania, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands before returning to Washington December 8.

4. Biden Expresses Gratitude to U.S., Iraqi Forces (12-02-2011)

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2, 2011 – Joined by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and Iraqi President Jalal Talabani in Baghdad yesterday, Vice President Joe Biden thanked U.S. and Iraqi armed forces for their sacrifices, commitment and success.

“I also know you gentlemen will acknowledge that America sent you the very best our country has to offer -- our young men and women, ... but also their leaders,” Biden told the Iraqi leaders, praising the leadership of U.S. Ambassador to Iraq James F. Jeffrey and Army Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commander of U.S. Forces Iraq.

The vice president surveyed the U.S. and Iraqi troops assembled in Al Faw palace, all “bound together by a shared sacrifice in the service of both their countries.”

Given a mission “as complicated and as challenging as any in our history,” they adapted with the changing situation on the ground tackled everything they were asked to do, he said.

“You succeeded,” he said. “You helped defeat a tyrant, helped beat back violent extremists, and enabled the rise of a new democratic nation, and gave the Iraqi people a chance, at long last, for a better future -- a future they deserve.”

Working side by side, the U.S. troops and Iraqi security forces “have laid the foundation for a long-term, strategic partnership between our nations and also for an Iraq that, against all odds, can serve as a source of stability not only for its people, but here in the region, and for years to come,” he said.

Biden noted how far the situation in Iraq has progressed, and he acknowledged the troops’ “heroic work” that made it possible. “Because of you and the work those of you in uniform have done, we are now able to end this war,” he said.

The United States has kept its promises – to remove all U.S. troops from Iraqi cities, to end its combat mission last August and reduce its forces in Iraq to 50,000, and now, to remove all troops by the year’s end, Biden noted.

Biden shared Maliki’s observation that some have questioned whether Iraqi security forces would be ready to assume full security responsibility for their country.

“But the Iraq security forces proved to be more than ready,” he said. “You met the challenge. Throughout the downturn of United States forces and coalition forces, you kept your people safe. And violence has remained at its lowest level since 2003 -- because of you.”

Now comes a time of transition, Biden said, as the United States and Iraq explore ways to expand their relationship for the future, calling it a new chapter and a fresh start that both the Iraqi and American people want and deserve.

The strategic framework agreement between Iraq and the United States will guide this relationship, with broad cooperation across wide areas he said, noting that unlike the security agreement, it does not expire.

It represents “a fundamentally different type of relationship, grounded in civilian cooperation between equal sovereigns,” he said, and a long-term comprehensive relationship between the two nations.

“It means America will remain deeply engaged here in Iraq, and throughout the region,” he said. The United States will remain a loyal partner, he added.

Biden offered high praise for U.S. service members and Iraqi security forces for paving the way for a new generation of Iraqis to face a hopeful future with decreased violence.

“It was the sacrifice and bravery and professionalism of all of you assembled before me in uniform that made it possible,” he said. “And it will not and should not be forgotten -- either in Iraq, or in my home country of the United States of America.”

He paid special tribute to the 4,486 who made the ultimate sacrifice, and more than 30,000 who were wounded in Iraq.

“We honor their sacrifice, as well as yours, and we take immense pride and success in what you have done,” he told the assembly, noting the nation’s responsibility to care for its veterans.

“We owe you,” he said. “The only sacred obligation our nation has is to care for those who we send to war, and care for them when they come home.”

As the last of U.S. forces return home this month and their mission ends in Iraq, Biden acknowledged that the threats they confronted haven’t disappeared. He expressed confidence, however, that the Iraqis are ready to confront them.

“Iraqi security forces have been well trained and prepared, and you are fully capable of meeting the challenge,” he said. “And Iraq’s emerging, inclusive political culture will be the ultimate guarantor ... of this stability.”

Biden challenged the Iraqis to seize the opportunity to provide their people a normal, prosperous future, knowing that the United States remains a committed partner.

“Our forces are leaving with their heads held high,” he said. “But the hard-won ties between our two nations, pray God, will live on.”

Related Sites:

[U.S. Forces Iraq](#)

Related Articles:

[Biden Trip Marks New Alliance with Iraq](#) (12-01-2011)

[Joint Statement Affirms Strong U.S.-Iraq Partnership](#) (11-30-2011)

[Biden Arrives in Iraq as Drawdown Enters Final Month](#) (11-29-2011)

[5. White House Fact Sheet: U.S.-EU Partnership \(12-01-2011\)](#)

Fact Sheet on the United States’ Relationship with the European Union: An Enduring Partnership

The United States and the European Union are committed to ensuring that our partnership brings greater prosperity and security to our 800 million citizens and to working together to address global challenges. Our shared values and experience will enable us to spur economic recovery and job creation; buttress transitions to democracy in the Middle East and North Africa; and, protect our citizens.

The Transatlantic Economic Relationship Is a Cornerstone of the Global Economy

► The U.S. and the EU are the two largest economies in the world, accounting for almost 50% of global GDP. Together we are central to the global economy and are each other’s most important markets for our products and investments.

► Trade flows between the U.S. and the EU exceed \$3.5 billion per day. Foreign Direct Investment has created millions of jobs on both sides of the Atlantic and represents over 50 percent of global flows. In 2010, U.S. FDI into the EU – \$1.95 trillion – was more than twice U.S. FDI into any

other region in the world. The EU's 2010 Foreign Direct Investment of almost \$1.5 trillion into the U.S. is approximately quadruple the amount that the U.S. receives from any other region.

► On November 29, U.S. White House and Cabinet officials, EU Commissioners, and other senior economic policy and regulatory officials held the sixth meeting of the **Transatlantic Economic Council** (TEC). The TEC focuses on early coordination of regulations and standards to avoid future barriers to trade and to create new opportunities for jobs and growth through cooperation on regulation and innovation, including in key sectors, such as e-vehicles. By building a more closely integrated transatlantic marketplace, work done under the auspices of the TEC strengthens the capacity of both our economies to innovate and compete in global markets.

► The **U.S.-EU Energy Council**, led by Secretary of State Clinton and Secretary of Energy Chu, EU Commissioner for Energy Oettinger and High Representative Ashton, met on November 28 to review progress achieved on strategic energy issues, cooperation on energy policies, and research collaboration on sustainable and clean energy technologies. Council leaders renewed their commitment to continued cooperation on energy for mutual security and prosperity and emphasized the importance of leading-edge energy technologies in creating jobs and fostering economic growth.

The U.S. and EU Support Transitions to Modern Economies and Democracy

► The U.S. and the EU are the two largest providers of official development assistance (ODA), amounting to over 80% of global ODA this year.

► **Arab Spring.** In the Middle East and North Africa, the U.S. and the EU have increased cooperation on coordinated messaging to governments on the need for an inclusive transition process, including social and economic reforms, the value of civil society engagement, and the importance of government-led donor coordination. The U.S. has allocated \$135 million in Economic Support Funds in FY2011 to address new needs and opportunities generated by the transitions. The U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation has committed to provide \$2 billion in financing over the next three years to stimulate private investment and growth. The Middle East Partnership Initiative has \$80 million in funds for FY2011 to support pluralism, participation, and prosperity in the region.

► **Support for Human Rights in Iran and Syria, Countering Threats to International Security.** Against Iran, the U.S. and EU have imposed increasingly tough sanctions, drawing on UN Security Council resolutions, in response to Iran's continued noncompliance with its international nuclear obligations and other destabilizing activities. We have also imposed measures against regime elements responsible for serious human rights abuses. The E-3 and other EU members of the IAEA Board of Governors voted for the November 18 IAEA Board resolution against Iran. Both the U.S. and EU are committed to the dual-track approach of pressure and engagement. In Syria, the U.S., EU, and like-minded nations have implemented strong sanctions to increase pressure on the Assad regime and target those responsible for grave human rights abuses. In both the U.S. and the EU, these include a ban on the import and sale of oil from Syria, the principal source of hard currency for that regime. We have also led efforts to call attention to Syria's human rights violations in the Human Rights Council, each convening a special sessions on Syria.

► **Afghanistan/Pakistan.** In Afghanistan, the U.S., EU, and other European donors provide the majority of funding for stabilization, promotion of democratic governance, and transition to a sustainable economy. As primary donors to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, the U.S. and EU are facilitating a more effective and transparent national and local government. In FY2011, the United States provided \$2.5 billion for civilian assistance. The funding supports a broad range

of activities to further stabilize and develop Afghanistan with special emphasis on building capacity and ensuring transparency within the Afghan Government, constructing energy infrastructure required for sustainable economic development, bolstering agricultural production, and ensuring gains in healthcare and education are expanded. U.S. efforts also focus on empowering women by increasing their access to healthcare and education and facilitating involvement in economic and political activity.

► The U.S. is the largest bilateral donor in Pakistan. We are providing \$1.1 billion in FY 2011 in civilian assistance to help Pakistan address energy challenges, foster economic growth, stabilize border regions, and improve civilian governance. A stable, tolerant, prosperous, and democratic Pakistan is in both of our long-term interests.

► **The EU's European Neighbors.** The U.S. has remained committed to helping the Balkans integrate into the Euro-Atlantic community. In FY 2011, the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development allocated approximately \$283 million in assistance to the Balkans. \$37 million focused on security assistance, while about \$246 million focused on development assistance to address fundamental issues of democratic reform, market-based economic modernization, and the rule of law.

► This year, we have provided approximately \$18 million in assistance to Belarus, the majority of which is targeted to create space for the free expression of political views, human rights, civil society development, and media freedom.

► In FY 2011, we provided over \$120 million in assistance to encourage Ukraine's transformation into a free-market, democratic society. These programs are targeted to strengthen democratic institutions and processes, bolster the rule of law, fight corruption, deepen market reforms, enhance energy security, provide humanitarian aid, and promote the adherence of security sector and law enforcement practices to Euro-Atlantic standards.

U.S.-EU Commitments on Trans-national Security Issues Protect Our Citizens

► **Cybersecurity and Cybercrime.** The U.S.-EU Working Group on Cybersecurity and Cybercrime made significant progress in 2011 in each of its four priority areas of cooperation: incident management; public-private partnerships; awareness raising; and cybercrime.

-- The U.S. and EU held a joint, "Cyber Atlantic" cyber incident management exercise on November 3 and a joint capabilities workshop in June. Designed to work towards synchronized, coordinated responses to cyber incidents of mutual concern, the program will culminate in a full joint U.S.-EU cyber exercise in 2013, involving the private sector.

-- The Working Group developed an in-depth strategy for public-private sector engagement, building on existing initiatives, and focused on two key areas of mutual concern: botnets and industrial control system security/smart grid security. In 2012, the Working Group will also work on confronting unfair market access barriers that U.S. and European technology companies face abroad.

-- This year the U.S. and EU launched a program for immediate joint awareness raising initiatives, which led to an exchange of information during U.S. National Cyber Security Awareness Month, and development of a roadmap towards synchronized annual awareness efforts—culminating in a fully-fledged EU and U.S. Cyber Security month by 2014.

-- Cybercrime activities focused on: combating child pornography through more rapid identification, notice and takedown procedures; enhancing security of domain names and IP addresses to combat illicit use; and encouraging ratification of the Convention on Cybercrime. We committed to expand the global number of states party to the Budapest Convention, including all European states' accession by the end of 2012.

► **CVE.** The U.S. and the EU have leveraged our respective efforts to counter violent extremism by sharing information, coordinating communication and counter-narratives, and empowering local partners. We are sharing case studies to enable analysts to improve their ability to identify patterns that help prevent violent extremism. We participate together with other international partners to coordinate on counter-messaging against al-Qaida. The U.S.-EU Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Steering Committee organized an expert-level seminar on CVE issues in Somalia and the Somali Diaspora in January and is planning a similar initiative for other Diaspora communities in 2012.

► In the future, we hope to expand this cooperation by broadening our outreach to and information sharing with diaspora communities, government and law enforcement officials, and our respective domestic communities. The U.S. is considering supporting the EU's Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN) by providing access to USG CVE practitioners and experts. RAN is an EU-wide umbrella network of practitioners and local actors involved in countering violent radicalization that will enable members to share and discuss best practices in identifying and addressing radicalization and recruitment leading to acts of terrorism. The EU co-chairs the Horn of Africa Working Group of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) launched in September by the U.S. and Turkey. Other areas for potential cooperation include training money services businesses to recognize suspicious transactions and funding training to empower young people to counter violent extremism on the internet.

► **Passenger Name Record.** The U.S. and the EU work together to facilitate the secure travel of our citizens, while protecting their individual privacy. 22 million Europeans and Americans cross the Atlantic every year generating over \$70 billion in travel and tourism revenues. The best way to identify and mitigate the threat from evolving terrorist and criminal tactics is through information sharing and in-depth analysis. A prime counterterrorism tool for that analysis is Passenger Name Records (PNR) data, which is a proven and vital means for identifying known threats early and identifying previously unknown persons adopting suspicious patterns of behavior. On November 17, the U.S. and the EU initialed an agreement on the transfer and future sharing of PNR, and it was approved by the full European Commission on November 24. It now needs to be ratified by the Council and Parliament of the European Union. This agreement demonstrates how we are working with the EU to fight terrorism and transnational threats, while respecting our commitment to the civil liberties and rights of our citizens.

► **Visa Waiver Program.** Currently, 23 of 27 EU Member States are part of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), which allows tourist and business travelers who are citizens of those countries to travel to the U.S. without needing to apply for a visa prior to traveling. We are working with the other EU Member States with the goal that they will be able to qualify for the program in the future. In FY 2011, over 7.5 million citizens of EU Member States visited the United States under the Visa Waiver Program. We are also working with countries already covered by the VWP to execute required information sharing agreements – with the aim of securing travel by deterring, detecting, and preventing the travel of those who would seek to do harm in either the U.S. or the EU.

► **U.S.-EU Crisis Management Framework Agreement.** On May 17, Secretary of State Clinton and High Representative Ashton signed the Framework Agreement between the U.S. and the EU on the Participation of the U.S. in EU Crisis Management Operations. This Agreement builds on existing U.S. participation, which the U.S. and EU had separately negotiated and agreed, in the EU Rule of Law mission (EULEX) in Kosovo and in the EU Security Sector Reform mission (EUSEC) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Agreement provides a legal framework for U. S. civilian participation in EU crisis management missions, to strengthen our practical, on-the-ground coordination in crisis situations.

► **Transatlantic Task Force on Urgent Antimicrobial Resistance.** At the 2009 Summit, leaders established this task force focused on appropriate therapeutic use of antimicrobial drugs in the medical and veterinary communities, prevention of both healthcare- and community-associated drug-resistant infections, and strategies for improving the pipeline of new antimicrobial drugs, which could be better addressed by intensified cooperation between us. The task force completed its work this year, and in September issued a set of 17 recommendations for future US-EU cooperation. Work now turns to continuing this collaboration by implementing the recommendations issued by the Task Force.
